

# Salary critical, but culture is key to success

## **BUSINESS**

*Get the workplace culture right and people will be drawn to you, says BDO's Janet Daubney.*

By [Philip King](#) • 24 November 2022 • 5 minute read

The salary bubble will eventually burst and firms should focus on establishing an attractive culture that will draw staff to them regardless, says Janet Daubney, head of people and culture at BDO Australia.

Speaking on the latest Accountants Daily podcast, produced in conjunction with Daniela Pasini, national director professional services, Business Banking at CBA, Ms Daubney said authenticity and transparency were two other must-haves to retain the best talent.

"Salary is absolutely an important and critical part of what we can offer," she said. "However, when we look at that salary ... that bubble has to burst at some point in time. And it creates a lot of internal challenges when you actually don't think about that holistically."

She said it was vital to look after loyal staff which went beyond remuneration.

"So what we offer is a total package, a total proposition, which consists of rem, which is attractive and competitive to the market, but it's also about, How are we going to develop you? How are we investing in you?"

"And I know this probably sounds naff, but it's about bespoke agreements and conversations that managers and partners have with their direct team members to help them achieve their dreams, which is our purpose."

Since the pandemic, flexibility was no longer a wish list item but staff expected it as an entitlement.

"BDO works in a hybrid manner, each of our offices probably at differing levels because there are different client needs, there are different team needs."

"There is a level of flexibility where each and every team and service line across the firm have been given that level of flexibility to work that out themselves."

“There’s some guidelines, of course, but there is autonomy. And you know, there's that trust that the teams will do the right thing within the teams to work effectively.”

But specific work and salary conditions came second to establishing a good work culture, she said.

“Get the culture right. There is no right or wrong on what that culture looks like, as long as it's right for you.

“But the culture that you aspire to have must be shared across the firm. It's got to be persuasive, it's got to be enduring, and it's got to be implicit.

“And once you've got that, if you've got that, then you'll start to draw the people that you want, and that fit within that desired culture.”

Next on her list was prioritising the people you attract.

“We're a people business, and people have to be at the core of everything that we do. If we focus on our people, and we invest properly – and I'm not just saying throw money at them, I'm saying investing properly in our people, listening to them and investing – the results follow.

“And tied to that is authenticity and transparency. So leadership and behaviours that are consistent with our purpose and values, that will ensure that we've got genuine connections and relationships with our people.

“So if we get that right, then commercial outcomes will all follow.”